

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 03551 221419Z

43-40

ACTION NEA-09

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R 221214Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3488

USCINCEUR

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 3551

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS:

SUBJ: VISIT TO BEIRUT OF MAJOR GENERAL REHM

1. ON THURSDAY MAR 20 AT LARGE SOCIAL GATHERING WIFE OF BRAZILIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD ME IN FRONT OF OTHERS THAT SHE HAD JUST MET THURSDAY AFTERNOON AT LINDA SURSOUK'S, (PROMINENT LEBANESE OCTOGENERIAN HOSTESS WHO RUNS THE CLOSEST THING TO A BEIRUT "SALON" REPEAT "SALON") AN AMERICAN MAJOR GENERAL WHO WAS VISITING BEIRUT IN CONNECTION WITH DUTIES IN KUWAIT. THESE DUTIES, THE BRAZILIAN SAID THE GENERAL DESCRIBED AS BUILDING MISSILE SITES FOR THE KUWAITIS. SHE EMPHASIZES HOWEVER THAT THESE ARE NOT RPT NOT OFFENSIVE MISSILE SITES BUT ONLY INVOLVED WITH AIR DEFENSE. I DID NOT RPT NOT AT ANY TIME KNOW OF ANY SUCH VISIT SO WAS ABLE TO BE COMPLETELY NONCOMMITTAL AND VAGUE WITH THE BRAZILIAN. I HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY LEARNED THAT MAJ GEN REHM DID SPEND TWO NIGHTS IN BEIRUT IN CONNECTION WITH WHAT WAS DESCRIBED TO MY DEFENSE ATTACHE AS PURELY A SHOPPING TRIP. HE WAS PRECEDED HERE BY HIS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER WHO CHECK IN WITH MY DEFENSE ATTACHE AND SOUGHT OUR ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORTATION AND HOTEL RESERVATIONS.

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2. I HAVE NO RPT NO OBJECTION TO U S FIELD
GRADE OFFICERS VISITING BEIRUT. I DO HOWEVER
STRONGLY OBJECT TO LOOSE TALK AT SOCIAL GATHERINGS.
BEIRUT IS UNQUESTIONABLY THE REPEAT THE RUMOR MILL
OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE GOOD LORD ONLY KNOWS HOW
SOMELESS THAN FRIENDLY NEWSPAPERS MIGHT INTERPRET
THE GENERAL'S MISSION WHICH MIGHT BE MENTIONED TO
THEM BY THIRD PERSONS IN LURID TERMS.

3. I ACCORDINGLY MUST REQUIRE THAT IN THE FUTURE
SENIOR AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL COMING INTO BEIRUT
FOR NO MATTER WHAT REASON SHOW GREATER DISCRETION AND
THAT THEY PERSONALLY CHECK IN WITH MY DEFENSE ATTACHE
SO THAT THE LATTER CAN BRIEF THEM ON THE DANGERS OF
LOOSE TALK IN THIS CITY.
GODLEY

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